

LIGHTS and SHADOWS

from the
Dishman Hills

February 2006

FUTURE TALE

The following is an adventure in eco-science fiction. As with any "stab" at foretelling the future, one has to use present trends, greatly magnified and projected into the years yet to come. The future is really up to us and is full of many choices.

Well, here we are well into the year 2106 and the Natural Area is looking better than ever. The first buttercups have been up for two weeks and being mid-February the grass widows can't be far behind. No snow again this winter. The Association is 140 years old in August and is still not showing it's age!

The books are closed for 2105. Our Fast Pass revenues of \$76K last year were down due to one of our trailhead collection scanners that was put out of action by a pesky raccoon. Hikers, don't forget to wear your ID chip when coming to the Hills. Failure to do so will result in heavy fines subtracted automatically from your accounts. Trailhead entry scanners are an important source of income for us and \$20 is hardly more than a token for entry (check for 2 for 1 coupons in next month's newsletter). Last year we earned 54 carbon credits! Those big trees really soak up the carbon from the air. We plan to sell the credits to the coal-fired electric guys to the south; they never seem to have enough and pay top dollar.

The ecology is still thriving and there should be another green spring (unlike 2072-2075). Those several spots of Mongolian fireweed on the south side are about gone thanks to the genetically altered beetles supplied by DNR. We live in wonderful times, don't we! Our electronic nature trail will be running by April. Those with receivers (available at Target) will get the full scoop on the species when within 10 feet distance from the buried microtransmitters beneath the plant or imbedded in the animal. Info will include descriptions, video clips, and local environmental conditions (temp, moisture, etc.). As usual, the GPS coverage will show your location anytime when asked. We will be applying for a grant for the holographic display software for this system, so stay tuned. Remember the old days, old timers, when surface signs cluttered the vistas? Several businesses offered system cost support if we would put some ads in transmissions, but who needs more of those. Section C of the natural area will be closed next month for environmental springback. If your ID chip starts beeping it means that you entered sector C and you have only 60 seconds to leave before a fine is charged. A reminder that a chirping ID chip at trailhead means that the natural area is at capacity and you must wait until some hikers leave. We have some complaints about not enough benches at trailheads for waiters; anyone got some extra ones out there?

With our latest house purchase, we have just about completed our Natural Area Boundary Protection Program (NABPP). Circling the wagons is a western tradition! The program seems to really work in keeping the metro guys from succeeding in their continuous attempts to condemn parts of our forest using the emanate domain laws passed in 2050. They claim that there is just not any room left for the building and facilities needed with population increases. One guy, who will go unnamed, even accused us of robbing them of important tax revenues by keeping all this "unused" space. Boy, have we heard that before.

In summary, in 2106 the Dishman Hills are looking good. Those names of past supporters of Spokane's natural spaces, like Rogers, Lininger, and Roskelly, now seem as vague as second cousins twice removed but what they saved are today's gems and we owe them.

HAWAIIAN CONNECTION

Last month the Association was sent a newspaper article from West Hawaii Today that discusses how Hawaiians can fight to retain the natural setting of their community. The example used to illustrate how it works was the Dishman Hills Natural Area. The Dishman story told was about how ordinary citizens got together to save the forested hills with land purchases and by staying involved with their local government to ensure responsible stewardship of an important part of their community. The article challenges them to get off the sidelines, stop gripping, and start "building a fire" under local officials like the Spokaneites if they "ever expect to see some vestige of their childhood memories" of their rapidly disappearing natural spaces to remain.

This story is also being told in Spokane as community groups in the Ponderosa, in Lincoln Heights, and in many others places around the area are fighting to keep their neighborhoods from cashing in all their green spaces for development. We hope that the Dishman Hills can provide an example of possible success to all those striving to hold on to the natural character of their community.

ORGANIZATION NEWS

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to saving nature areas in the Spokane region for public enjoyment and education. Call Michael Hamilton, 747-8147, if you have any questions. We meet every other month on the third Tuesday at Opportunity Elementary School, S. 1109 Wilbur, in the teacher's lounge, 7pm. Our next meeting will be March 20.

The following are our January donors that have consented to be listed: Greg & Lois Baker, Marjorie Benander, Jim & Maralyn Bertis, John Cobb, Frances Davis, Robert Downing, June Foote, Sally Gerimonte, Gary & Andrea Gunning, Dianne & Mark Huggar, Jayce Keeling, Bettie Maron, Brian & Beth Miller, Don Nelson, Marion Pillsbury, Neil Prescott, Marjorie Rozell, Shirley Schneider, Victoria Sola, John & Barb Swan, Jeanne Wilson, Harold Wimpy, and two anonymous donors. Thank you for starting off the year right.

Everyone needs beauty as well as bread. Places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul. - John Muir

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